Free Discount Prescription Drug
Cards Available to
All Residents

During the past several weeks, Montgomery County residents were sent a free prescription drug card that will provide average discounts of 20% at



130 participating drug stores and pharmacies in the county.

Under an agreement with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the pharmaceutical company AdvancePCS, the county is distributing drug cards to every household in Montgomery County. There are no enrollment or usage fees associated with this card. Residents simply show the card at participating pharmacies to obtain the discount, which is valid at drug store chains as well as independently owned stores. The actual discount amount depends on the specific drug being purchased.

There are no requirements of residency, age, income level or existing health insurance. The card does not provide health insurance, but simply extends discounted pricing to individual residents derived from the larger purchasing power of Montgomery County and NACo. Montgomery County's plan is modeled after a similar plan successfully implemented in Nassau County, New York.

If you have not yet received a prescription drug card in the mail, please call (240) 777-6530 or visit any public library branch or regional service center to get one for free. If you have received a card and have questions about how to use it, please call Mary Anderson at (240) 777-6534. More information is available on the county website www.montgomerycountymd.gov.

County Celebrates Dr. King Birthday, Sponsors Community Service Projects

On January 17, 2005, Montgomery County will officially commemorate the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a celebration sponsored by the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach beginning at 3:00 PM at the new Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center. Beginning at 12 Noon that day at the same location, the County Executive's Volunteer Center will honor the legacy of Dr. King's commitment to public service by sponsoring a number of volunteer service projects to help needy residents in the county. The public is encouraged to volunteer for these service projects.

Since 1994, the Dr. King holiday has been transformed into a community collaboration focusing on volunteer service, interracial cooperation and antiviolence initiatives for youth. By holding a traditional celebration and sponsoring volunteer service projects, the County Executive is commemorating Dr. King's fight for the freedom, equality, and dignity for all people by enacting change through nonviolence and community service.

The community service portion of the day will engage volunteers in such projects as assembling bag lunches for the homeless, decorating placemats to be used by Meals on Wheels, packing personal items for use at homeless shelters,

see Dr. King's Birthday page 4

Message from the County Executive



DOUGLAS M. DUNCAN

Dear Friends:

As 2004 comes to a close, I send greetings for a wonderful and safe holiday season.

In recent months, too many families in Montgomery County have suffered deeply because of senseless tragedies on our roads involving teenage drivers. Especially during this holiday season, I urge all drivers to take precautions, plan ahead and observe safe driving habits. Driving safely is not only the law, it may very well save innocent lives – including your own. For parents of young drivers, I urge you to engage your teenage daughters and sons to discuss responsible driving, obeying

speed limits and having alternative plans in place to get home safely. By taking simple steps and providing constant reminders to our teenagers, we can help eliminate the devastating injuries and deaths resulting from reckless and irresponsible drivers.

In several weeks, Montgomery County will formally observe the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In celebrating the life and work of this American hero, the Office of Community Outreach and the Volunteer Center, both part of the Offices of the County Executive, will host consecutive events at the new Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center on January 17, 2005. The Volunteer Center will kick off the day with a series of volunteer projects to honor the legacy of Dr. King's commitment to public service. Immediately afterward, the Office of Community Outreach will sponsor a formal program featuring keynote speaker Reverend Donell Peterman, founding Pastor of the Joshua Group Ministries. I look forward to seeing you at this event. For more information, please read the article on page 1 or call Tina Clarke at (240) 777-2500.

You have my wishes for a successful and happy 2005.

Sincerely,

Douglas M. Duncan County Executive

Douglas M L

Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer Parker Hamilton, Assistant CAO

Office of Community Outreach: **Debbie Resnick**, Manager **Shu-Ping Chan**, Asian Pacific American Liaison **Tina Clarke**, African American/Black Liaison **Joe Heiney-Gonzalez**, Latino/Hispanic Liaison

101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland 20850 (240) 777-2500 Fax: (240) 777-2517 www.montgomerycountymd.gov

Submissions, comments and event announcements can be emailed to:

InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov. Those received by the first of March, June, September or December will be considered for the next issue of *In Touch*. Articles may be reproduced or translated into other languages with attribution.

In Touch is free of charge and is published quarterly by the Office of Community Outreach in the Offices of the County Executive, Montgomery County, Maryland. To be on the mailing list, please call (240) 777-2500 or email InTouch@montgomerycountymd.gov

County Considers Charging Fee for Ambulance Service

In order to pay for needed upgrades and maintenance on the county's fire and rescue equipment, Montgomery County is considering new legislation that would impose an ambulance transport fee that many jurisdictions in our area and throughout the nation are already charging. If passed, a fee of \$350 will be charged for each transport, a charge that in most cases is already paid for by residents and is covered by most health insurance policies, including Medicare and Medicaid.

No resident will be denied ambulance service. Simple waiver procedures will be in place for those who use the service and are not able to pay the fee. Residents will not see any change in the services provided by Emergency Service Technicians (EMT). Residents should not hesitate to call for ambulance service because of fear of inability to pay.

In fact, EMTs and other staff will be instructed not to ask about insurance or related information until after tending the emergency at hand. In most cases, if insurance information is provided after the transport, insurance companies will be billed directly. In other cases, patients may receive a bill in the mail, which can then be submitted directly to the insurance company.

The fee is proposed because funding is needed for upgrades and maintenance in the county's fleet of fire and rescue equipment. Although residents are still currently receiving first rate emergency service, funding is needed to provide ambulance upgrades to medic unit replacements of an aging fire and rescue fleet, acquisitions of new emergency medical supplies and equipment to enhance services and to fund a full-time medical director for EMS quality assurance programs. An estimated \$8 to \$10 million is needed each year for the next five years to address apparatus management needs and to maintain the quality of fire and rescue service that county residents are used to.

Other local jurisdictions that already collect a fee for emergency medical services include Alexandria and Arlington counties in Virginia, the District of Columbia and Prince George's County. Other Maryland counties that collect an ambulance transport fee are Allegheny, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Cumberland, Frederick and Washington. In Virginia, Fairfax County recently approved a program to implement a transport fee. Across the nation, jurisdictions such as Dallas, TX; Honolulu, HI; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA; and San Francisco, CA also charge for emergency transports,



For more information about the proposed ambulance transport fee, call Montgomery County Department of Fire and Rescue Service at (240) 777-2400.

CAO Receives National Honor



Bruce Romer Chief Administrative Officer

Bruce Romer, the county's Chief Administrative Officer, was recently inducted as a Fellow in the prestigious National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). NAPA is an independent, nonpartisan organization chartered by Congress to help increase effectiveness, efficiency and accountability in public administration in

federal, state and local governments.

Appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council, the CAO supervises all Executive Branch departments and agencies, and advises the Executive on administrative matters. The CAO coordinates management review and decision-making on policies, programs, plans, budgets, legislation, regulations and related matters.

NAPA was founded in 1967 by James Webb, who was then head of the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA). Membership in NAPA is by invitation only and is limited to no more than 600 public administration professionals who have demonstrated a sustained contribution to the field through public service or scholarship.

As a NAPA Fellow, Mr. Romer joins an elite group of public policy experts, including current or former Secretaries of federal departments (22 in total), Members of Congress (11), Governors (7), Mayors (12) and Presidents of universities or colleges (25).

NAPA members are recognized nationally as a source of expert advice and have produced numerous influential reports and analyses on issues facing all levels and branches of government. They have been especially active in advising governments on the skills and strategies needed to meet today's homeland security challenges.

We send congratulations to Mr. Romer for this extremely prestigious recognition.

Community Outreach at the Commission for Women

Montgomery County's Commission for Women (CFW) has served residents for 32 years by reaching out to the community and raising awareness of issues that impact women. The Commission has a dual function as a county department as well as an advisory board to bring issues of concern to elected officials and decision makers with the goal of providing remedies to inequities in laws, policies and procedures.

The Commission monitors legislation, conducts research studies, hosts informational hearings and provides education on women's issues. CFW has also initiated specific projects to address the technology gap facing young women and the barriers facing women who recently immigrated to the country.

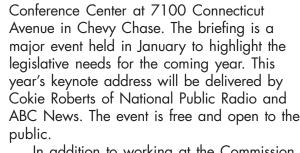
In addition, CFW provides counseling services and sponsors numerous workshops on a variety of topics. CFW counselors conduct sessions on personal, career and couples counseling. CFW also sponsors workshops in areas such as personal growth, professional development, financial independence and family wellbeing. There is a sliding scale fee for participating in counseling sessions and workshops.

One of the 12 hard working staff members at the Commission is Tracy Stuger, a five year veteran who previously served on the staff of former Congressman Louis Stokes of Ohio. In addition to working on the department's budget, Tracy provides staff support for the Commission's committees and projects.

This fiscal year, Tracy and the Commission are focusing on the Immigrant Women in (IWin) Montgomery County Committee, the Technology and Girls (TAG) Committee and the Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee. The IWin Committee has held seminars to develop a network of service providers that assist immigrant women. The seminars examined the needs of immigrant women in such areas as health, education, economic development, employment, safety, domestic violence, trafficking and access to services. The Committee will also translate several of its brochures into various languages to provide education on the employment rights of pregnant women and workplace harassment.

Since 1999, the TAG Committee has partnered with Montgomery College and Discovery Communications to host the Summer Computer Camp for Girls and to provide scholarships to girls of low income and those for whom English is a second language. With financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau, the Commission also developed a model curriculum for the Girls Computer Camp to help minimize the gender based technology gap.

Tracy is also the coordinator for the Commission's 2005 Women's Legislative Briefing, scheduled for January 30 from 12:30 to 5:45 PM at the National 4-H



In addition to working at the Commission for Women, Tracy finds time to advance her educational goals. She is currently finishing

her last year of law school at the University of Maryland at Baltimore. The law degree would complement her Master's in Public Administration from Baruch College at the City University of New York and her Bachelor's degree from Howard University. For all the work she does, we are happy to have Tracy as part of Montgomery County's diverse workforce and community.

For more information about the Commission for Women, including the 2005 Legislative Briefing, committees, workshops and counseling sessions, please call (240) 777-8300 or email cfw@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Dr. King Birthday continued from page 1

creating teaching aids for the Head Start program and putting together holiday gifts for the Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health for children facing lifethreatening illnesses. The celebration portion of the day will feature as keynote speaker the Reverend Donell Peterman, founding Pastor of the Joshua Group Ministries of Silver Spring. In addition to serving as a consultant to CONSERVE and a coordinator for worship services at the Central Union Mission, Rev. Peterman is an active member of the National Urban League, NAACP, Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery County Black Ministers Association, Silver Spring Community Vision and Silver Spring Rotary International Club, where he is currently serving as President. Rev. Peterman will speak on the theme "Injustice Anywhere is a Threat to Injustice Everywhere," a deeply held belief of Dr. King that has long inspired Civil Rights fighters.

The volunteer programs run from 12:00 noon to 3:00 PM while the celebration runs from 3:00 to 5:00 PM on Monday, January 17, 2005. A reception follows. All events are free, open to the public and are held at the Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road at the intersection of Rockville Pike just north of White Flint Mall. For more information or to register for volunteer projects, call Tina Clarke at (240) 777-2500 or the Volunteer Center at (240) 777-2600.

Impact Silver Spring

Since its inception in 1999, Impact Silver Spring has indeed made an impact – not only in Silver Spring but all around Montgomery County. Through its Community Empowerment program, Impact has provided a top rate leadership development and community action program geared for community leaders and those preparing to be the leaders of the future.

Now in its sixth year and with 91 alumni, the Empowerment program helps to provide the tools and to develop the personal relationships and understanding across lines of race, class and culture that will have a lasting impact in the county's schools, neighborhoods, businesses, government agencies and larger communities.

The Empowerment program is based on two distinct training stages of building foundations and taking action, which are then linked to the third permanent stage of making lasting impacts. In the foundation building stage, participants focus on three core components of establishing relationships, developing racial and cultural awareness, and improving leadership skills while engaging in personal growth.

In the second stage, participants build upon the relationships and awareness developed in the foundations stage to form a plan of action. In this action oriented stage, participants practice community building, community advocacy and developing community initiatives. Participants then join other leaders to provide changes intended to have lasting impact in our communities.

The success of this plan is apparent as alumni, staff and board members of Impact Silver Spring have made impact in many areas of the county. For example, Impact members have provided significant input on the county's continuing plan to implement Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy. In addition, an Impact alumna, Nancy Navarro, was recently appointed to a seat on the Montgomery County board of education. The initiative and leadership of Impact members are very apparent across Montgomery County.

If you are interested in being part of this dynamic program, Impact Silver Spring is now accepting applications for the Community Empowerment 2005 class, which begins in February 2005. Sessions are held approximately every two to three weeks mostly during after work hours and on weekends. In addition to the investment in time is a financial commitment. However, Impact Silver Spring is committed to ensuring that financial considerations do not prevent an applicant from participating. And participants are richly rewarded for their investment with resources and prospects for building better communities in the future.

For more information about Impact Silver Spring or to apply for the next Community Empowerment class, contact Mark Robinson at (301) 495-3336 as soon as possible or visit www.ImpactSilverSpring.org.

Collaboration Council

Serving the Children, Youth and Families here in Montgomery County Since 1992

Assuring a better quality of life and future for the families in Montgomery County goes beyond what any single agency or organization can accomplish entirely on its own. Recognizing the need for a community-based vehicle to develop an interagency collaboration around the unique needs of children, youth and families, the State of Maryland established Local Management Boards (LMBs) in every jurisdiction in 1992.

The Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, Inc. is one of those LMB partnerships. Comprised of public and private agencies, faith-based organizations, families, elected officials, businesses and community advocates, its main purpose is to assess community needs, identify priorities, target resources and oversee service delivery on initiatives that require collaboration between two or more child and family serving entities.

Its mission is to improve the well being of children, youth and families in Montgomery County through collaborative partnerships. With tremendous community support, the Collaboration Council developed The Children's Agenda to help partners work effectively and efficiently toward shared goals. Serving as a blueprint of what Montgomery County wants for all of its children and families, this agenda assists partners in nurturing a community where children are safe, healthy and successful in school while preparing for life with support from caring families and neighborhoods.

Working through an Executive Committee that oversees four working committees, the Collaboration Council offers numerous resources for providers on relevant legislation, funding opportunities, child well-being and demographic data with the goal of identifying and building partnerships to serve all communities in the county. As a quasi-public nonprofit entity, board members are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council.

The Collaboration Council has worked on a number of successful programs and initiatives, including collaborating on the county's Gang Prevention Task Force to assess the nature and scope of gang activity so prevention efforts can be rendered in a culturally effective manner and focused in appropriate geographic areas.

Gang Prevention Task Force Presents Final Report

On September 20, 2004, the Joint County Gang Prevention Task Force presented its final report to County Executive Douglas M. Duncan and Prince George's County Executive Jack Johnson.

Appointed in February 2004, the task force was charged with identifying, researching and recommending strategies that focus on gang prevention, suppression and intervention solutions to the problem of rising gang activity in the region. Cochairs of the task force were Police Chief Melvin High and Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services James Dula, Ph.D. for Prince George's County. Police Chief J. Thomas Manger and Health and Human Services Director Carolyn W. Colvin served as Montgomery County's co-chairs.

Some of the key recommendations for programs that will directly affect community members include conducting safety assessments in schools using the approach developed by the National School Safety Center, developing an educational campaign for residents on gang recruitment and activities, providing after-school programs for student during the highest atrisk hours of 2:00 PM to 6:00 PM on school days, hosting a series of outreach meetings for youth to discuss reasons for joining gangs, creating an anonymous telephone tip line so residents can report graffiti or suspicious activity, requesting local boards of education to review dress code policies to enable principals to ban clothing or colors associated with gang membership, providing more in-school police officers, and finally implementing in-school suspension programs so students do not entirely lose touch with school during disciplinary periods.

Other recommendations relate to government action, including calling for continued collaboration between Montgomery and Prince George's counties to address gang activity, creating additional partnerships with area jurisdictions, employing state and federal resources, and continuing involvement with youth groups and nonprofit organizations to address gang activity in the region.

After reviewing the Joint County Task Force report, County Executive Duncan is now preparing Montgomery County's Gang Prevention Task Force Final Report and Recommendations to address the specific needs of the county. A presentation of this report to the County Council is scheduled for January 2005. For more information call Joe Heiney-Gonzalez at (240) 777-2525, Kate Garvey at (240) 777-1223 or Traci Anderson at (240) 777-1269.

People's Counsel

He is not your free personal lawyer, but he can assist you and your neighborhood or community on land use and zoning issues. Established by the County Council in 1999 under Montgomery County Code §§1A-204 and 2-150, the Office of the People's Counsel helps all residents understand and participate more effectively in hearings before any of Montgomery County's boards that make decisions on land use and zoning.

Martin Klauber has served as the People's Counsel since December 1999 to help residents navigate the intricate maze of laws, polices and regulations dealing with rezoning, land use variances, subdivision plans and similar topics that can drastically affect the makeup, traffic patterns and ecology of neighborhoods and communities.

Although the office does not usually advocate for one side or another, the People's Counsel provides technical assistance to residents so they can better advocate for themselves during public hearings.

Under certain circumstances, the Office of the People's Counsel does participate in public hearings and take a position when it deems it is in the interest of the people and is doing so to protect the public good by presenting all relevant issues in a particular case. When officially participating in a hearing, the People's Counsel is a legal party of record and can claim all rights and privileges, including receiving notices, calling and cross-examining witnesses, introducing evidence and making legal arguments.

Mr. Klauber has extensive experience in land use law. He is a graduate of George Washington University law school and New Jersey's Rutgers College. He co-founded the Maryland Land Use Round Table and has served in a number of legal positions involving land use and zoning, including National Capital Planning Commission, Washington DC's Board of Zoning Adjustment, and as counsel to the Chilean Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs and the Urban Planning Institute of the Catholic University in Chile.

As part of his community outreach efforts in Montgomery County, Mr. Klauber would like to address meetings of community, civic and neighborhood associations about the role of the Office of the People's Counsel. To see if the People's Counsel can help you with a zoning issue or to schedule a presentation to your organization, call (240) 777-9700 or email martin.klauber@montgomerycountymd.gov.

County Partnerships Work to Address Community Employment Issues

Since October, representatives from Wheaton, Gaithersburg and the Offices of the County Executive have worked with residents, community organizations, police and businesses to address employment concerns regarding daily workers, known as day laborers. Day laborers usually gather at informally designated locations each morning to meet prospective employers, usually construction contractors or landscape professionals who provide work on a daily as-needed basis at worksites around the county.

Residents in Wheaton and Gaithersburg have identified a need to improve the method by which daily workers meet employers near neighborhood business establishments. In Gaithersburg, the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach (OCO) is working with Grace United Methodist Church to facilitate a meeting with organizations representing day laborers. Partnering with the City of Gaithersburg and Montgomery County Police Department, OCO is working to address the concerns of local businesses on public safety and well-being issues brought about by the growing number of day laborers in the area.

In Wheaton, a similar collaboration between CASA of Maryland, the Midcounty Regional Services Center, the Community Outreach Division of Montgomery County Police Department and OCO was established to address similar issues in this neighborhood.

Collaborations in both neighborhoods have yielded strategies that propose both short-term and long-term planning steps and solutions that focus on assuring that all county residents have the opportunity for gainful employment in Montgomery County and to live with dignity.

For more information about the Wheaton and Gaithersburg public/private planning efforts, contact Joe Heiney-Gonzalez at 240-777-2525 in the County Executive's Office of Community Outreach.

Collaboration Council continued from page 5

Working with the Montgomery County Police Department, the Council's Data Collaborative provided research and data analysis to better understand the nature and scope of gang related activity in Montgomery County.

In August, the Collaboration Council helped to sponsor the National Night Out Community Festival at North Gate Park in Aspen Hill. As part of a national campaign to raise awareness and prevent crime and drug use in neighborhoods, the Mid-County Neighborhood Initiative and CSAFE partnered with the

New Department Heads for Transportation and Fire Service

County Executive Douglas M. Duncan recently appointed two veteran public servants to head key departments. On January 1, 2005, Thomas W. Carr, Jr. will officially become the first uniformed head of the county's newly revamped Department of Fire and Rescue Service. Arthur Holmes, Jr. already began his duties as Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation.



Thomas W. Carr, Jr.

Chief Carr has served as Chief of the county's Division of Fire and Rescue Service for the past year, coordinating career operations and activities with the 19 volunteer fire departments. His experience in the Fire and Rescue Service spans more than three decades.

General Holmes retired as a Major General from the U.S. Army and has served as director of Go Montgomery! for the past two years. He also has seven years experience on the Montgomery County Planning Board, serving as a com-missioner, then as vice-chair and finally as chairman.



Arthur Holmes

We wish Chief Carr and General Holmes well as they assume their new duties.

Council to host a family event at North Gate Park that featured music, entertainment, games and prizes in a safe environment during a time when families were usually fearful to use the park due to incidents of crime. The basketball court was repaired and the play equipment replaced. Debris was removed. Police, families, businesses and community and faith organizations collaborated to make the park a safer place for the children to play and learn.

For more information about the Collaboration Council, how to use its resources, becoming a partner or appointments to the board, call Denise Ridgely at (301) 610-0147 ext. 205 or visit www.collaborationcouncil.org.

Community Events January

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration, January 17, 2005. Volunteer projects 12 noon – 3:00 PM. Formal program 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM. Reception to follow. Bethesda North Marriott Conference Center, 5701 Marinelli Road, North Bethesda. Please read article on page 1 or call (240) 777-2500 for more information.

Black History Month, February 16, 2005 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Department of Health and Human Services presents musical depicting history of music in African American/Black communities. Lobby Auditorium, Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville. Offices of County Executive will host formal program during second week of February – call Tina Clarke at (240) 777-2500 for more information.

Lunar New Year: Offices of the County Executive, Multicultural Library Advisory Committee and Friends of the Library presents 15 events at eleven library locations to celebrate the Year of the Rooster, Year 4703, which begins on February 9, 2005. The events are held on weekends beginning January 29 and goes through February 19. For complete schedule, visit www.montgomerycountymd.org/library or call Yuli Estler at (240) 777-0024.

Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity

holds many free events, classes, and seminars for residents on topics as citizenship preparation, computers, English language, family law, buying a house, immigration, workers rights, small business development, tax preparation and finding a job. Please call (240) 777-4940 for more information. The Gilchrist Center is located at 11319 Elkin Street in Wheaton, one block from University Boulevard and is easily accessible by bus or Metro.

Office of Community Outreach
Offices of County Executive Douglas M. Duncan
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

